

AMERICA'S #1 SUPER HERO!



\$1.75
CANADA
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MIRACLEMAN

Nº 15

ALAN MOORE

TM
JOHN TOTLEBEN



TOTLEBEN



"SOME NIGHTS ARE BUSY, BRIMMING WITH NEW STARS TO FIND AND NAME, OR DESERT WASTES TO IRRIGATE.

"SOME NIGHTS ARE QUIET.

"YESTERDAY, I GENETICALLY REINTRODUCED TAME MASTODONS TO LONDON'S PARKS. TODAY HAS BEEN COMPARATIVELY DULL.

"I HATE THE SILENCES.

"...IT TUGS ME OUT, AND TAKES ME BACK...

"...AND I REMEMBER

"I REMEMBER: WERE I SOMEONE ELSE I'D WISH TO GOD THAT I DID NOT, BUT, BEING GOD, HAVE NONE TO WHOM I MIGHT ADDRESS SUCH PLEAS.

"OMNIPOTENT, I CAN THUS TURN TO NO ONE, CANNOT SHARE MY GUILT OR SHAME...

"...THE BUCK STOPS HERE.

"BEYOND THE MOON, STILL TAKEN BY THE NOVELTY OF OTHERS LIKE OURSELVES, WE WERE YOUNG GODS AT PLAY ABOVE A WORLD THAT NEVER DREAMED OF US..."

"...A WORLD THAT NEEDED NEVER HAVE THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF TERRIBLE NEW CREATURES IN ITS MIDST."

"I STILL RECALL THE MOMENT: AVRIL POINTING TO THE BRAID OF SMOKE TWISTING BETWEEN THE SMALL, IMAGINARY SPIRES OF LONDON, RECONSTRUCTED THERE UPON THE WARPSMITHS' SIMULTANEOUS HOLOGRAM FACSIMILE OF EARTH."

"KNEELING ON SURREY, BENDING LOW, PEERING PAST ROOFTOPS THATCHED WITH LIGHT DOWN TO THE BONSAI STREETS BELOW..."

"A BOMB? A BURNING SUBWAY? SURELY NOTHING **WORSE**..."

"...SURELY THE GREAT MAJORITY WENT ON AS USUAL WITH THEIR LIVES?"

"...WE SAW THERE HELL IN ZERO GAUGE; SAW HORROR AND RED DEATH ABROAD UPON A NORMAL AFTERNOON; SAW THERE OUR GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG; OUR RAGNAROK..."

"...OUR END."

MIRACLEMAN

Book
III

Chapter
Five

NEVER SAYS



"WHAT USE CONCEALMENT, WITH THE AGE OF GODS BEGUN WITHOUT US? IMAGINE THAT: OMNISCIENT, YET TAKEN BY SURPRISE."

"OH, WE RECOVERED SOON ENOUGH; WERE FLASHED TO LONDON IN LESS TIME THAN "LONDON" TAKES TO READ..."

"...BUT HE'D BEEN THERE FOR HOURS."

"JUST IMAGINE."

"THOSE HOURS THAT HE HAD CRAMMED WITH CENTURIES OF HUMAN SUFFERING; THOSE NARROW SIDE-STREETS FILLED WITH MILES OF PAIN..."

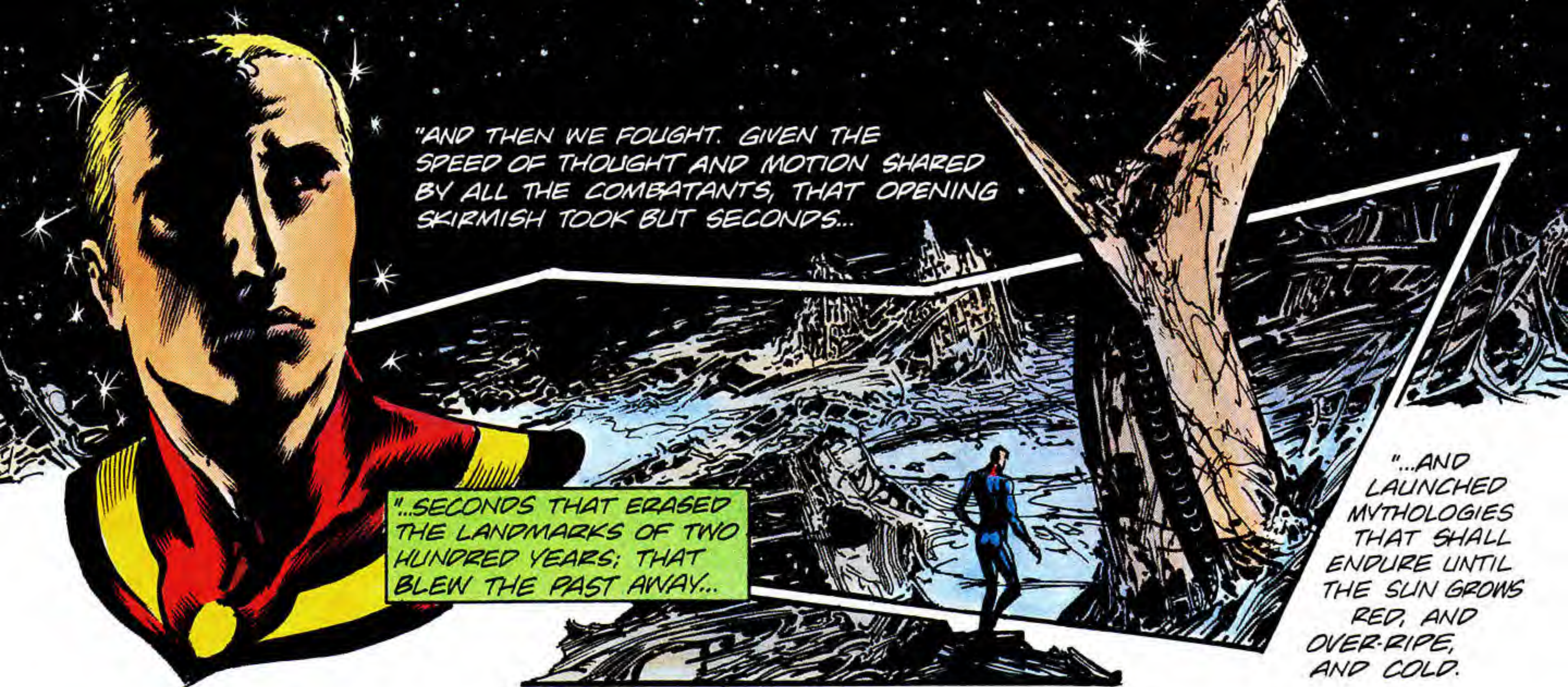
"...HAVING EXHAUSTED ALL THE HUMDRUM CRUELITIES KNOWN TO MAN QUITE EARLY IN THE AFTERNOON, HE HAD PROGRESSED TO INNOVATIONS UNMISTAKABLY HIS OWN."

"OF COURSE, I LATER REALIZED HE'D BEEN WAITING THERE FOR ME WHILE, UNAWARE, I FROlickED ON A SATELLITE. JUST WAITING, WAITING THERE FOR HOURS AND KILLING PEOPLE WHILE HE WAITED..."

"...KILLING TIME."

AT LAST.

REALLY, WHAT MUST ONE DO TO GET ATTENTION 'ROUND HERE?



"AND THEN WE FOUGHT. GIVEN THE SPEED OF THOUGHT AND MOTION SHARED BY ALL THE COMBATANTS, THAT OPENING SKIRMISH TOOK BUT SECONDS...

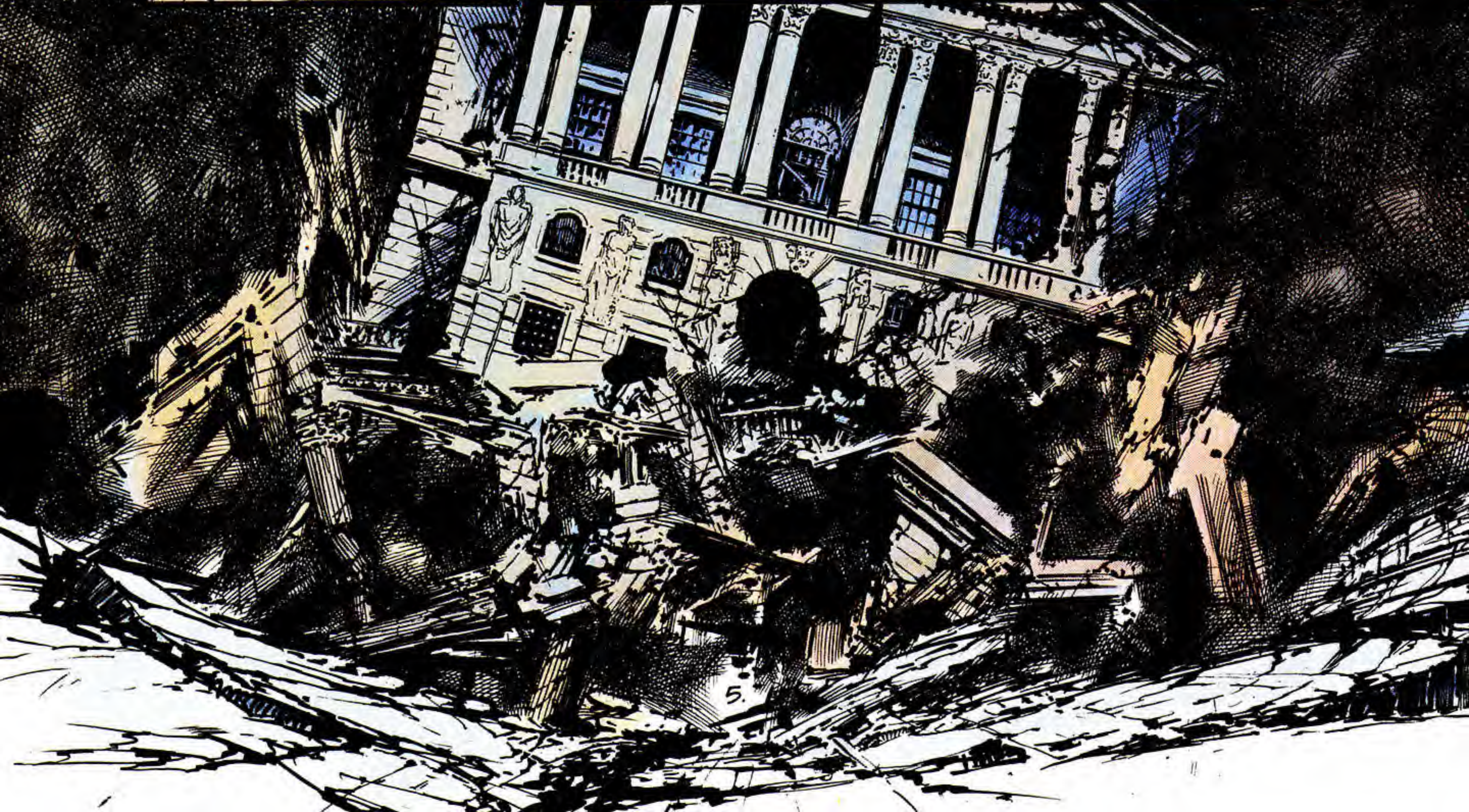
"...SECONDS THAT ERASED THE LANDMARKS OF TWO HUNDRED YEARS; THAT BLEW THE PAST AWAY...

"...AND LAUNCHED MYTHOLOGIES THAT SHALL ENDURE UNTIL THE SUN GROWS RED, AND OVER-RIPE, AND COLD.

"HE JUST ATTACKED, NOT ASKING WHO THE OTHERS WERE. I WONDERED IF HE'D EVER WOKEN FROM GARGUNZA'S DREAMS. IF HE BELIEVED THOSE SENSELESS FANTASIES WERE TRUE, WHY NOT AS WELL ACCEPT A WARPSMITH, CARING LITTLE WHENCE IT CAME...



"...AND LESS WHAT IT COULD DO?"





MIRACLEWOMAN WAS THE FIRST TO MOVE UPON HIM, BRIGHT BLUE LIGHTNING STRIKING THROUGH THE SETTLING OCHRE DUST...

"HE RECOGNIZED HER; SAID THAT HE REMEMBERED HER FROM WHEN HE'D BEEN A CHILD; EXPRESSED SURPRISE SHE WAS ALIVE; SUGGESTED NOVEL WAYS TO REMEDY THAT FACT..."

"THE BANK OF ENGLAND'S MASS OF DEBT AND CREDIT COULD CONTAIN HIM NOT AT ALL."

"ERUPTING IN A WATERSPOUT OF KRUGER RANDS, HE SHOWERED IN BLOOD AND GOLD WHILE FROM A THOUSAND FLUTTERING NOTES THE QUEEN LOOKED ON, AS EVER, UNPERTURBED."

"...IN FAIRNESS, OF THE TWO, SHE WAS MORE GRACEFUL AND CONTROLLED, MORE SKILLED AND MORE INTELLIGENT IN HER ATTACK, HER MOVES MORE SUBTLE AND PRECISE."

"JUDGED IN THOSE TERMS, I'D SAY SHE WON."

"THERE WAS NO PAUSE AND NO RESPIRE.
HE LEAPT FOR AZA CHORN, FAST AS A CHEETAH;
AS A MAMBA; AS AN INK-BLACK THUNDERBOLT.

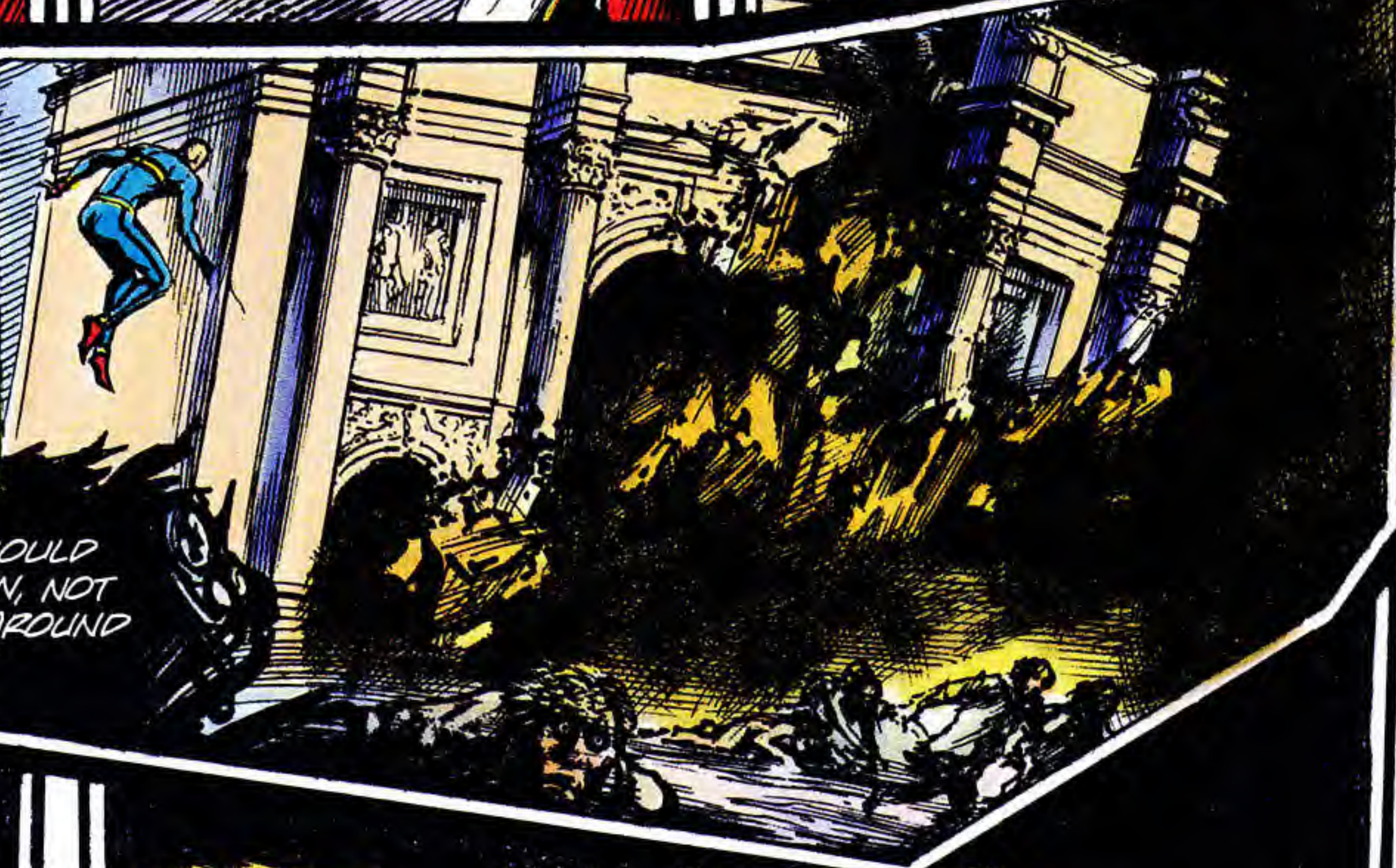
"YET WHEN THEY BRAG AMONGST
THEMSELVES, THE CATS AND
SNAKES AND SHEETS OF
LIGHTNING USE ONE ULTIMATE
COMPARISON, ALBEIT
SPARINGLY:

"FAST AS A WARPSMITH."



"POOR MARBLE ARCH, IT COULD
AFFORD NO MORE RESTRAINT
THAN COULD THE BANK OF
ENGLAND. WOULD THAT AZA
CHORN HAD TELEPORTED
BATES ELSEWHERE AND NOT
REMOVED SO CHARMING AND
PREPOSTEROUS A FOLLY
FROM OUR SKYLINE...

"...BUT THEN, HE COULD
NOT HAVE KNOWN, NOT
BEING RAISED AROUND
THESE PARTS."

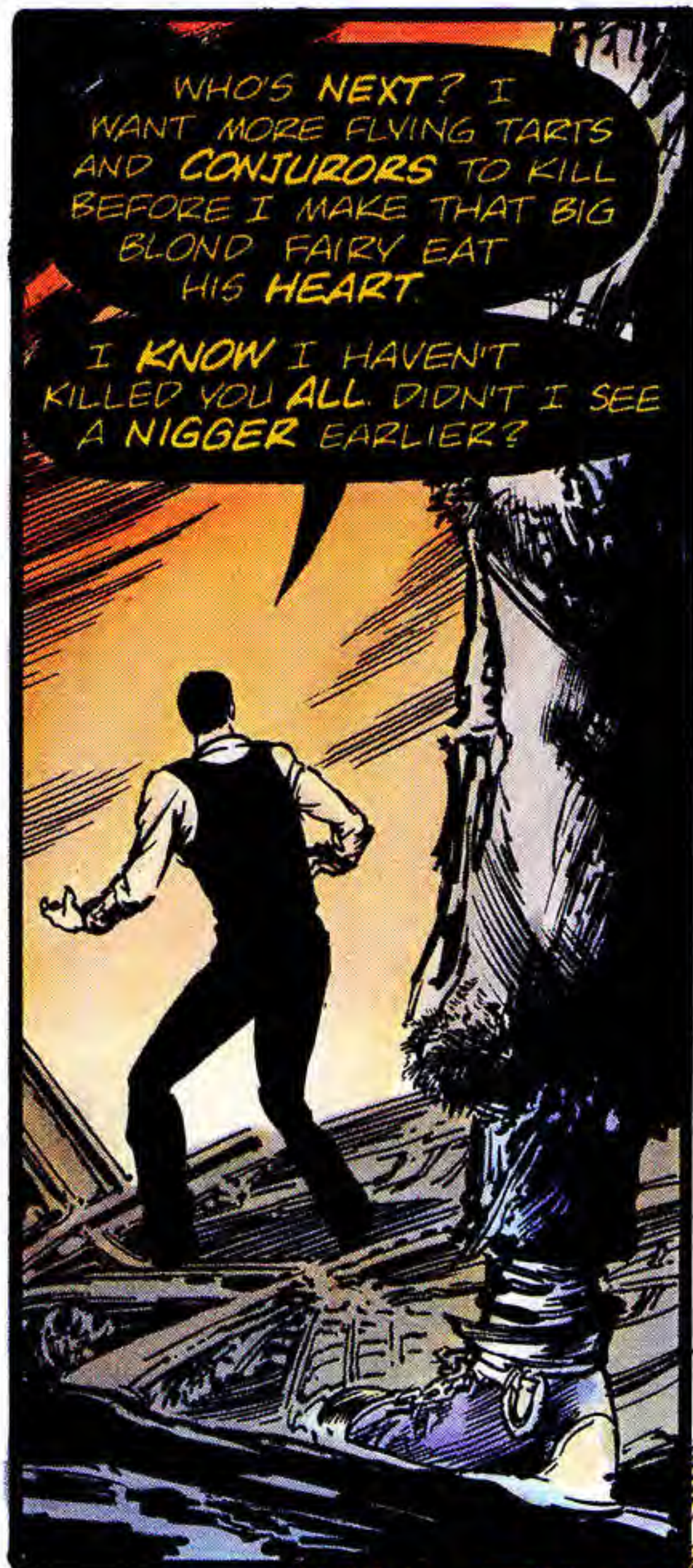


IT DIDN'T HOLD
HIM NOW IT'S UP
TO ME...

NO. LET THE **FIREDRAKE**
BUY US TIME. I MUST LOCATE
A MEANS BY WHICH TO
PURCHASE EXTRA **POWER**.
IT WILL REQUIRE A TRIP TO **HOD**,
MY HOMELAND, GALAXIES AWAY.

WHAT?
BUT...

THERE.
IT IS
ARRANGED.



WHO'S NEXT? I WANT MORE FLYING TARTS AND **CONTURORS** TO KILL BEFORE I MAKE THAT BIG BLOND FAIRY EAT HIS **HEART**.

I **KNOW** I HAVEN'T KILLED YOU **ALL**. DIDN'T I SEE A **NIGGER** EARLIER?



ATCHLY, WE PREFER THE TERM 'BLACK PERSON.'



Nah.
YOU DON'T GOT IT YET.



SEE, I AIN'T INTA GETTIN' **BURNED**.
HELL NO.



AM INTA **BURNIN'**.

MAN, I BURN ALL **KINDSA** SHIT.



BURN
HOUSES...

...AUTOMOBILES...

...GAS
MAINPIPIES...

"I SAW HIM AT THE FIRESTORM'S
HEART, HIS BUSINESS SUIT RE-
DUCED TO ASH. THE COSTUME
UNDERNEATH (HAD HE REMOVED IT,
EVER? HAD IT GROWN WITH HIM?)
WAS NOT THE YELLOW I REMEM-
BERED, BUT A FLAT AND
LIGHTLESS **BLACK**.

"I HEARD HIS AWFUL ROAR..."

"...THEN AZA CHORN LED ME AWAY IN
SEARCH OF GREATER POWER.

"THE BATTLE, FAR TOO BIG TO BE CONTAINED
BY SIMPLE **FACTS**, HAS SPAWNED SO MANY
DIFFERENT **LEGENDS**, EACH WITH ITS OWN
ADHERENTS; AS VALID, IF NOT MORE SO,
AS THE **TRUTH**.

"APOCRYPHA. IMAGINARY TALES: THE
LIBRARY AT OLYMPUS HAS A **THOUSAND** SUCH
UPON ITS SHELVES.

"IN ONE SUCH STORY...TRUE OR FALSE, WHO KNOWS?...WE ARE TRANSPORTED BY THE WARPSMITH'S POWER TO SILENCE, ON THE SEABED, WHERE HE'S MAGICALLY ARRANGED EQUIPMENT BORROWED FROM HIS AWESOME RACE, THAT WILL TRANSMIT A LIVING THING THROUGH TIME.

"PROPELLED HENCE TO THE PAST, OUR OBJECT IS TO HARNESS ENERGIES RELEASED BY CLASHING WITH MY EARLIER SELVES.

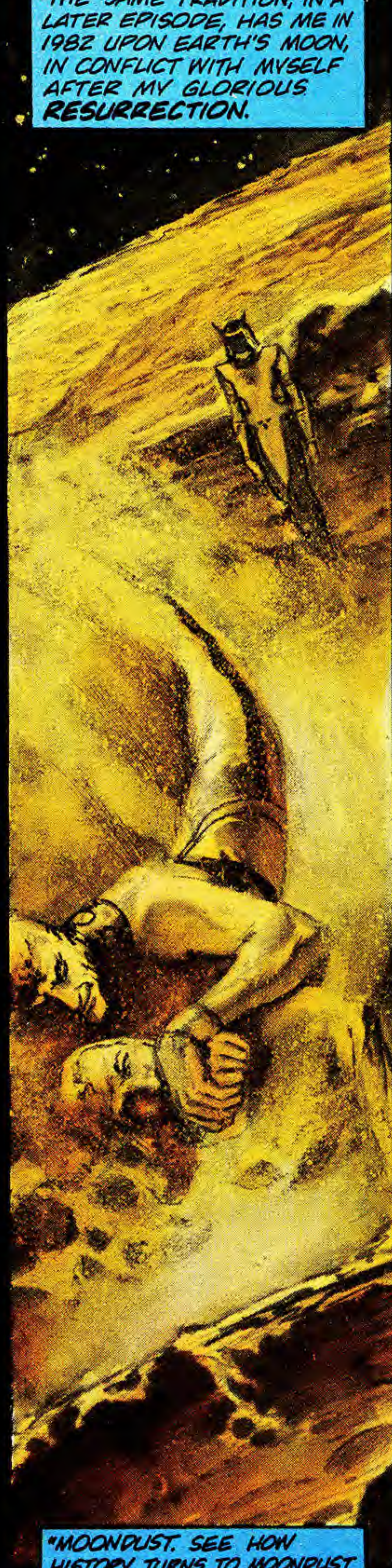
"THUS, BACK IN 1963, ABOVE THE ARCTIC CIRCLE, I CONFRONT THE MIRACLEMEN FAMILY UPON THEIR WAY, UNKNOWNLY, TO FACE ATOMIC DEATH.

"THE THEOLOGIANS WHO SUPPORT THIS VERSION ARE CALLED 'TRANS-TIME INTEGRATIONISTS.' TO THEM, THE TALE'S SYMBOLIC OF THE WAY IN WHICH, TO OVERCOME ADVERSITY, ONE MUST FIRST FACE AND OVERCOME ONE'S PAST.

"THE SAME TRADITION, IN A LATER EPISODE, HAS ME IN 1982 UPON EARTH'S MOON, IN CONFLICT WITH MYSELF AFTER MY GLORIOUS RESURRECTION.



"OH, HOW INGENIOUS; HOW BAROQUE THESE MYTHS BECOME.



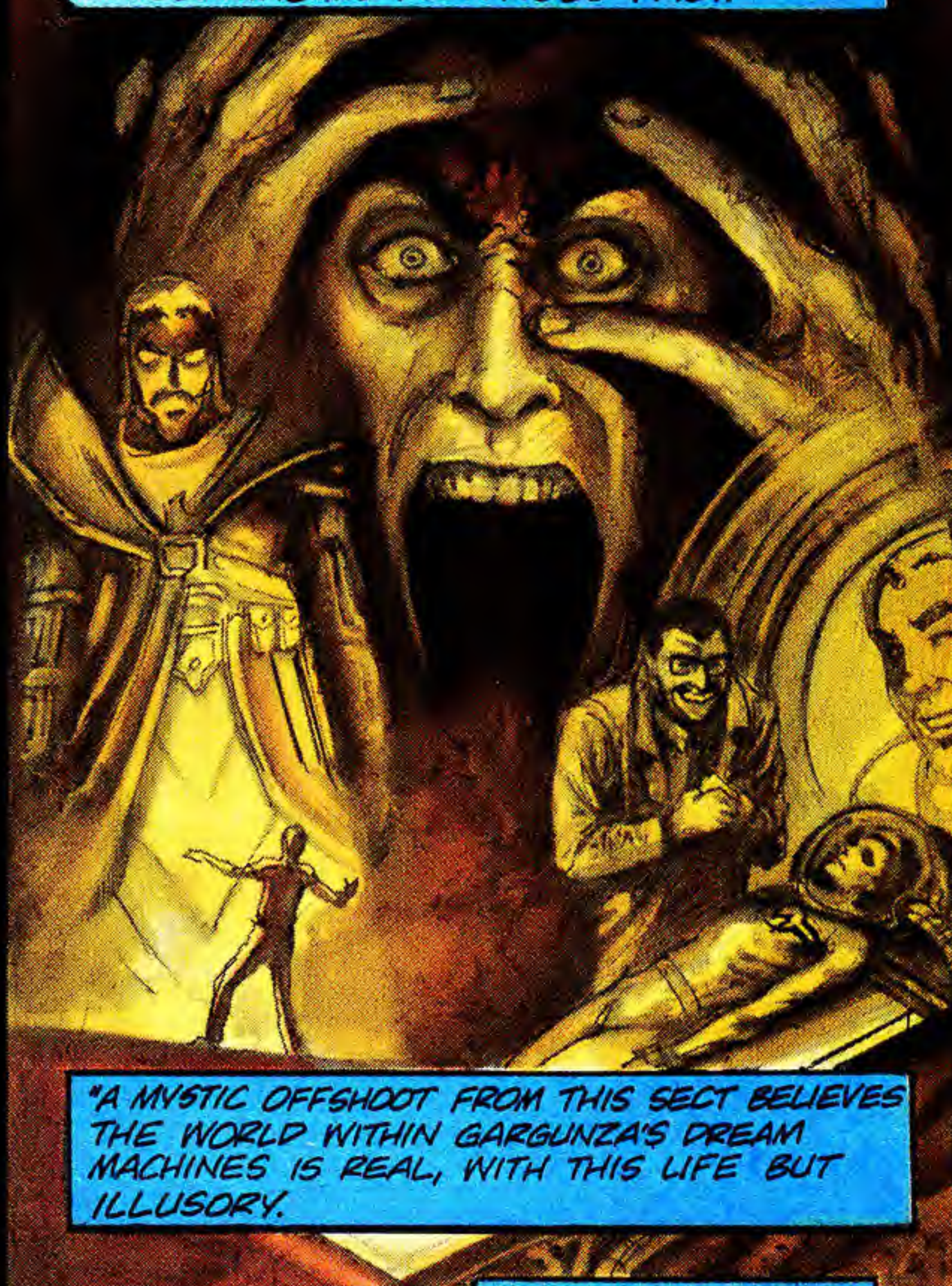
"MOONDUST. SEE HOW HISTORY TURNS TO MOONDUST IN THEIR HANDS.

"THE WITNESSES OF THE CONSPIRACY,' CON-
VERSELY, HOLD THAT WE OBTAINED OUR
VICTORY BY SELLING EARTH INTO THE
THRALL OF ALIENS WHO PLANNED TO WIPE
AWAY OUR CULTURE WITH THE FLOOD OF
DANGEROUS NEW IDEAS THAT SPILLED
FROM THEIR INHUMAN MINDS.



"WHO IS TO SAY? THEY MAY BE RIGHT.

"THE RATIONAL BRETHREN,' AFTER
THOROUGH RESEARCH, HAVE MORE
PLAUSIBLY SUGGESTED THAT OUR ENEMY
WENT MAD, CONFRONTED BY THE TRUTH
CONCERNING HIS FICTITIOUS PAST.



"A MYSTIC OFFSHOOT FROM THIS SECT BELIEVES
THE WORLD WITHIN GARGUNZA'S DREAM
MACHINES IS REAL, WITH THIS LIFE BUT
ILLUSORY.

"THEY HAVE A POINT.

"FOR MY PART, I PREFER THE GNOSTIC
FAITHS, SUCH AS 'THE KNIGHTS OF
WARPSMITH RESURRECTED,' WHO, IN SYMBOL-
LADEN GOSPELS, TELL HOW I PLAY CHESS
WITH BATES FOR EARTH, ATOP A
MOUNTAIN OF THE DEAD...



"...AND AZA CHORN, WHEN I'VE LOST
EVERY PIECE SAVE ONE, TEARS OUT HIS
HEART AND CRIES, 'HERE!' PLAY WITH
THIS INSTEAD."

"BUT BEST OF ALL, 'THE CHURCH OF DEICIDE'
RELATES HOW WE APPROACHED THE OLD,
SICK GODS OF EARTH AND MURDERED THEM
TO STEAL THEIR POWER.



"THEY TELL OF SHIVA, QUITE DISARMED;
OF GABRIEL'S BLAZING SWORD SNAPPED
INTO TWO ACROSS MY KNEE.

"THE CHURCH HAS ONLY NINETEEN
WORSHIPPERS. I SEND THEM SMALL
DONATIONS, UNDER DIFFERENT NAMES.

"WHERE MOST OF THESE CONFLICTING HERESIES AGREE IS IN THE FINAL OUTCOME OF THE TALE: WITH ENERGY OBTAINED, WHETHER BY DEICIDE, TRAVEL IN TIME OR TREACHERY, WE BOTH AT LAST RETURNED TO SILENCE, HOPING WE'D HAVE TIME TO USE THE POWER WE'D GAINED...

"...HOPING IN VAIN..."

"HE WAS AMONGST US, SNORTING, STAMPING. THERE WAS NOTHING SANE IN HIS INCINERATOR EYES.

"HE WAS AHRIMAN. HE WAS LOKI. HE WAS LUCIFER AND SET. HE WAS THE BAD GOD, CAST IN AWFUL FLESH. WE'D HAD NO TIME TO DRAW UP PENTACLES OR WORK OUR CHARMS...

"...BUT THROUGH ONE CLOSING EYE, HALF-PULVERIZED, I GLIMPSED THE WARPSMITH AS HE SCRATCHED A HASTY SIGIL IN THE AIR THAT WOULD RELEASE THE GATHERED FORCES HARNESSSED THERE.

"THERE WAS WHAT I CAN ONLY CALL THE ABSENCE OF A FLASH, AND THEN THE LOW BEGINNINGS OF A MONSTROUS NOISE..."

"...THE END OF SILENCE.

"AT THE OCEAN'S DEEPEST POINT THE PRESSURE WAS UNMEASURABLE, AND AZA CHORN THREIN UP A SHIELD ABOUT US BOTH THAT HELD UNTIL HE'D MOVED ALL COMBATANTS ELSEWHERE..."



"AGAIN, I WISH 'ELSEWHERE' HAD NOT MEANT LONDON.
CALL IT SENTIMENT, BUT I STILL MISS THOSE HUDDLED
BUILDINGS, MUDDLED CENTURIES AND STYLES...

"...THE TRUTH IS, AZA CHORN KNEW
VERY FEW LOCATIONS ON THIS EARTH,
AND FELT A BOND OF LOVE TO
NONE OF THEM.

"HOW STRANGE, THEN, THAT
HE GAVE HIS LIFE AWAY
FOR US."

THE EXPLOSION
AND SUB-SEA PRESSURES
HAVE DISTRESSED HIM.
STRIKE BEFORE
HE RISES...

BASTARDS.
BASTARDS, EAT YOU.
EAT YOUR CITIES.
EAT YOUR
CHILDREN...

...EATING LIFE...
...SHITTING SKULLS.



"THERE WERE SO MANY VEHICLES, ALL TRYING TO GET OUT OF LONDON."

"MY APOLOGISTS HAVE CLAIMED THE CAR THAT I FIRST HURLED AT BATES WAS **EMPTY**, THOSE WHO'D BEEN INSIDE HAVING ALL PREVIOUSLY ESCAPED."

"I'M SORRY, BUT THAT ISN'T TRUE."

TYPICAL. WHENEVER
YOU'RE **LOSING**, YOU START
TO THROW THE **TOYS**
AROUND.

WELL, **TWO** CAN
PLAY AT THAT GAME.

IT'S JUST
EMPTINESS FOR YOU,
JOHNNY. **EMPTY CRUELTY**.
EMPTY LIFE. LOOK WHAT
YOU'VE **DONE** TO YOURSELF,
TO EVERYTHING
AROUND YOU.

YOU'VE TAKEN
SOMETHING **MARVELOUS**
AND TURNED IT INTO
SEWAGE.

GOD FORGIVE YOU

JOHNNY, **LISTEN**...
YOU'RE **DOOMING** YOURSELF.
WHAT...WHAT HAPPENS WHEN
YOU RUN OUT OF THINGS
TO **DESTROY**?

BURN
IN HELL.

"AND I DID."

"...DRENCHED BY THE PETROL, I TOOK ON A FLICKERING SECOND SKIN OF LIQUID FIRE, SO THAT I COULD NOT SEE FOR FLAMES BUT ONLY HEARD HIS VOICE, HIS LAUGHTER.

"WHEN HE LAUGHED HE'D SOUND HIS AGE, WHICH WAS THIRTEEN.

"WHILE I BATHED IN RAW FLAME, THE WARPSMITH, WADING THROUGH COLD LOGIC, HAD ARRIVED AT A SOLUTION TO OUR PLIGHT.

"...UNLIKE THE QYS, WHOM AZA CHORN HAD FOUGHT BEFORE, THESE TERRAN VARIANTS DID NOT RELY UPON A RANGE OF BODIES WITH TOUGH SKIN, BUT, SEEMINGLY, UPON A FORCEFIELD.

"WE'D DROPPED A BANK ON HIM. HE'D BEEN UNHARMED. WE'D WARPED HIM INTO STONE. HE'D BROKEN OUT...

"ONE DID NOT THROW BANKS AT FORCEFIELDS...

"...WHEN A PEBBLE MIGHT SUFFICE...

"...IF IT WERE PLACED INSIDE."



"GROTESQUELY, HE STILL LIVED, EACH OF HIS MORE-THAN-HUMAN CELLS GRIPPED BY A HORRID URGE TO CLING FAST AND SURVIVE."



"HE LIVED, HE ROARED, AND AS THE WARPSMITH REACHED FOR FURTHER MISSILES TO EMBED WITHIN OUR ENEMY..."

"...HE STRUCK."



"STRUCK MORTALLY..."



"...AND WARPSMITH, EYES GONE SOMEWHERE COLD, SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE PAIN, FACED DEATH LIKE SOME ALBINO SAMURAI AND INSOLENTLY STARED IT DOWN..."

"...FOR JUST ONE VITAL INSTANT LONGER."



AAAOK SHIT!

"EVEN FOR HIM, THE PAIN MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE BEYOND IMAGINING. WE DO FEEL PAIN, THINGS SUCH AS WE, AND WHEN PAIN COMES WE HAVE NO PLACE TO HIDE FROM IT..."

"...SAVE ONE."

Mmmrruhh...

Mmrruhh... Murrukle... Mmhhn...

"THE RUSH OF AIR FROM THE EXPLOSION TORE THE CLOAK OF FLAMES FROM MY BACK, AND AS ITS ECHOES DIED I PEERED THROUGH SMOKE AND ASH TO SEE WHAT LINGERED AT THE CENTRE OF THE BLAST.



"A SMALL THING, SHIVERING AND ALONE..."



JOHNNY?



I...I DID IT AGAIN, DIDN'T I?

HE GOT OUT.
BAD JOHNNY
GOT OUT.



I...I CAN'T KEEP HIM IN. I'M NOT **STRONG** ENOUGH. HE'LL JUST KEEP GETTING **OUT!** HE'LL JUST KEEP **DOING** IT AND **DOING** IT AND **DOING** IT...

SHHHH. IT'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.

IT'S **NOT!** IT'S **NEVER** GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT!



I...LISTEN, I PROMISE YOU, YOU'LL NEVER HAVE TO SUFFER THROUGH THAT AGAIN. KID MIRACLEMAN WON'T BE COMING BACK.

Y-YOU REALLY **MEAN** THAT? YOU'VE DISCOVERED SOME NEW WAY TO STOP ME CHANGING **INTO** HIM?

YES. YES, I HAVE.

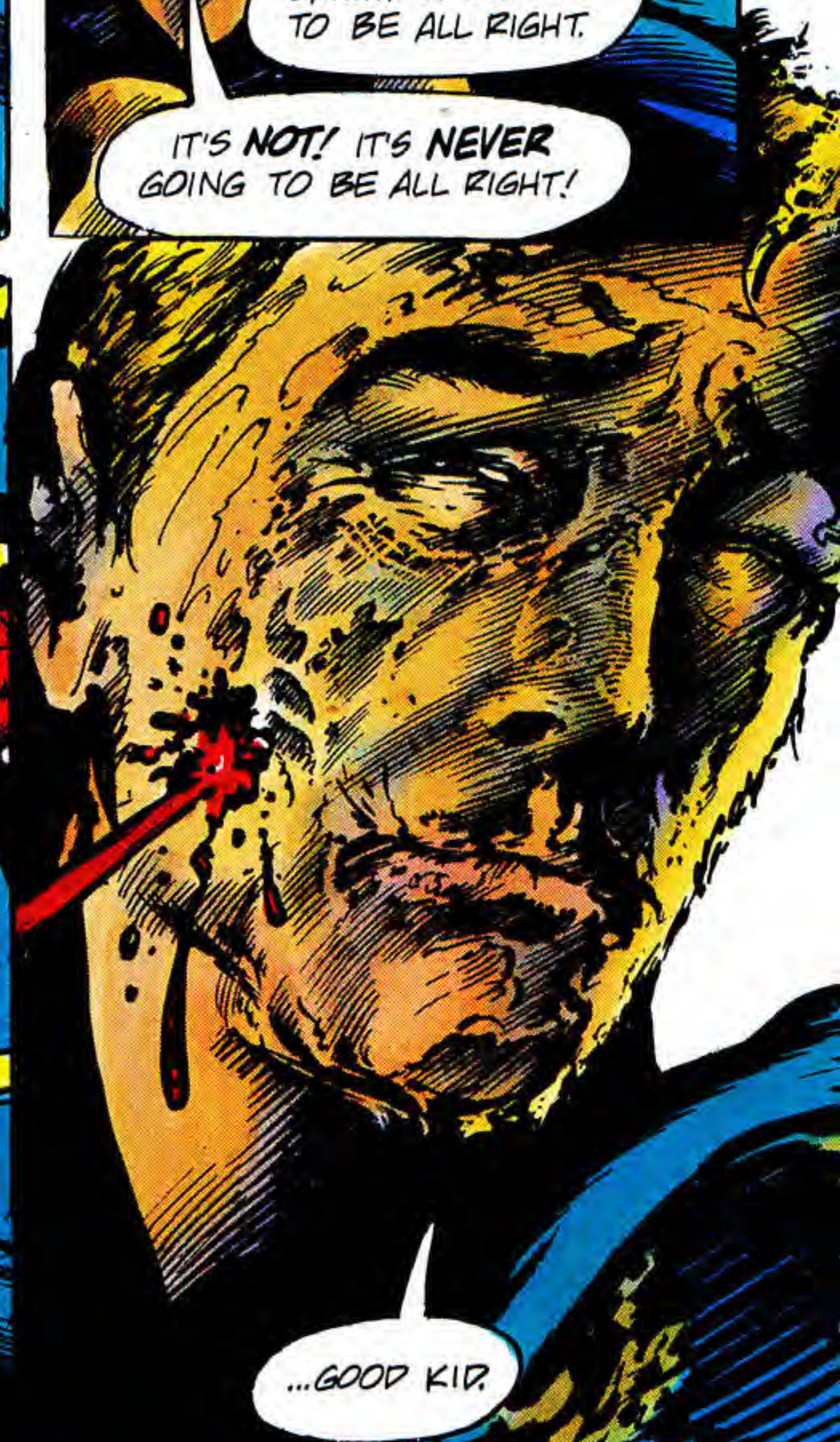


OH THANK YOU.

THANK YOU, YOU DON'T **KNOW**...I'VE NEVER BEEN SO **HAPPY**.
THANK YOU.

THANK YOU.

THAT'S OKAY. IT'S OKAY. GOOD KID, JOHNNY...



...GOOD KID.

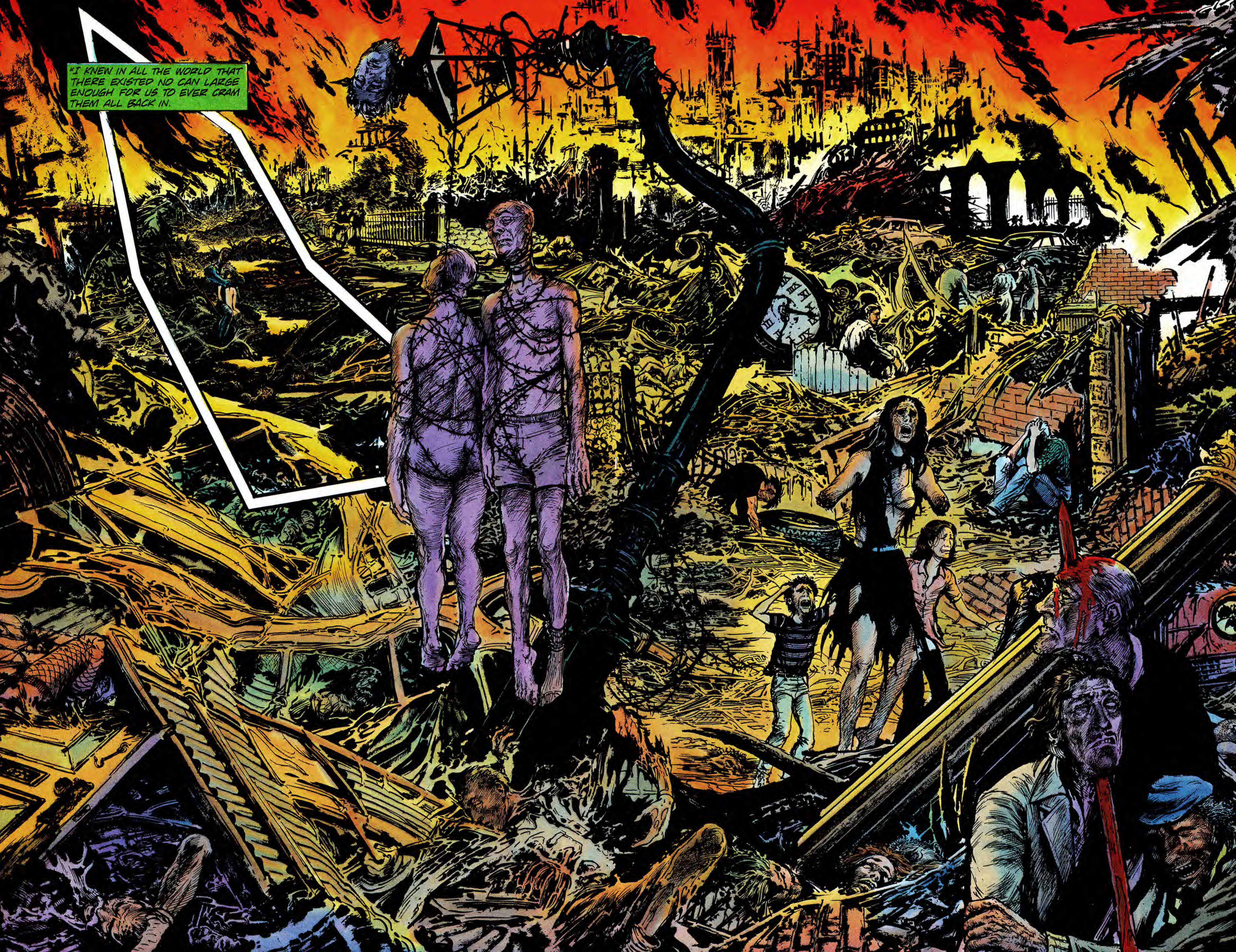
"I HELD HIM 'TIL THE SHUDDERING STOPPED, AND THEN
'TIL HE GREW COLD. OFF IN THE DISTANCE SIRENS CIRCLED
US LIKE CARRION BIRDS, THEIR MODULATED SHRIEKS
RINGING ACROSS THE WASTELANDS THROUGH THE RAIN.



"I THOUGHT ABOUT THE FIREMEN
AND THE DUMBSTRUCK AMBULANCE
CREWS. THE WORLD IN WHICH THEY
TRIED TO SLEEP THAT NIGHT WOULD
BE A DIFFERENT WORLD TO THAT IN
WHICH THEY HAD BEGUN THEIR DAY.

"DIFFERENT FOREVER: ALL THE
CATS WERE NOW OUT OF THE BAG,
THE WORMS AT LAST FREED FROM
THEIR TIN.

"I KNEW IN ALL THE WORLD THAT
THERE EXISTED NO CAN LARGE
ENOUGH FOR US TO EVER CRAM
THEM ALL BACK IN."



"THAT WAS TWO YEARS
AGO.

"THE WORMS SURPRISED
US ALL BY TURNING
INTO BUTTERFLIES...

"WE HAVE NOT TURNED THEM INTO HUSHED
MEMORIAL PARKS, DRAWING A VEIL OF QUIET
DISCRETION OVER BLOODY FACT: HERE,
THERE ARE CORAL REEFS OF BABY SKULLS,
AND WORSE.

"MUCH WORSE.

"...AND YET, THOUGH FROM THE
DEVASTATED STREETS THERE
ROSE IN TIME AN EPIFICE
THAT WAS NO LESS THAN
ALBION, THAN CAMELOT
FULFILLED, WE STILL RETAIN
THESE KILLING FIELDS.

THESE CHARNEL PASTURES SERVE AS A REMINDER,
A MEMENTO MORI, NEVER LETTING US FORGET THAT
THOUGH OLYMPUS PIERCE THE VERY SKIES, IN ALL THE
HISTORY OF EARTH, THERE'S NEVER BEEN A
HEAVEN; NEVER BEEN A HOUSE OF GODS...

"...THAT WAS NOT BUILT
ON HUMAN BONES."

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ALAN MOORE JOHN TOTLEBEN SAM PARSONS
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WAYNE TRUMAN LETICIA GLOZER

TO BE CONCLUDED